

May 14, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

2148 '99 MAY 18 AM 11:39

**Re: Docket # 98N-1038, "Irradiation in the  
Production, Processing, and Handling of Food"**

To Whom it May Concern:

**I FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE FDA SHOULD CONTINUE USING THE CURRENT LABELING LAW IN  
REGARDS TO THE CURRENT TERMINOLOGY OF "TREATED WITH RADIATION" OR "TREATED BY  
IRRADIATION," AND THE USE OF THE RADURA SYMBOL ON ALL IRRADIATED WHOLE FOODS.**

Regarding the issue of labeling, in its initial petition, the FDA concluded that irradiation was a "material fact" about the processing of a food, and thus should be disclosed. The material fact remains; therefore, **labeling should remain**. Consumer acceptability, storage qualities and nutrients are affected. Some irradiated foods have different texture and spoilage characteristics than untreated foods. Most fruits and vegetables have nutrient losses that are not obvious or expected by the consumer.

As to the kind of label used, I believe that the label should be large enough to be readily visible to the consumer, on the front of the package. The label contains important information regarding the processing of the contents. For displayed whole foods such as produce, a prominent informational display similar to that used for meats should be used (but containing the term "irradiation" and the RADURA).

I recognize the RADURA as information regarding a material fact of food processing. **The requirement for irradiation disclosure (both label and RADURA) should not expire at any time in the future.** The material fact of processing remains. Even if some consumers become familiar with the RADURA, new consumers (e.g., young people, immigrants) will not be. The symbol should be clearly understandable at the point of purchase for every one. If there is no label, consumers will be misled into believing the food has not been irradiated.

Because of the newness of the technology and the need to assess the public health effects of widespread use of irradiated foods, I believe that the FDA's labeling requirement should not be permitted to expire. I would welcome the placing of comments received on the Internet so that we the public can be informed about who is participating in this comment process.

Also, processing by irradiation causes chemical changes that are not always detectable just by the eye and could be potentially hazardous. Meat may have a higher level of carcinogenic benzene. Some irradiated foods contain unique radiolytic products that have yet to be tested. Whether or not the FDA has approved irradiation as safe, it remains a new technology with no long-term human studies. We as consumers definitely have a right to know if this process has been used on our food.

Yours truly,



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